Ammonia and 1500 TPD Urea plant at Ramchandranagar near Agartala in Tripura;

(b) whether the above proposal was considered and recommended by the Department of Fertilizers in June, 1992; if so, what is the status of the proposal at present;

(c) what was the envisaged period of completion of the project from the zero date and what action is being taken up by Government to expedite the clearance of the project, in view of the lack of Urea production facilities in the country; and

(d) whether there is also a pending proposal by M|s. Oswal Agro Group for a gas-based 2 x 600 TPD Ammonia, 2 x 1043 TPD Urea and 300 TPD Methanol Plant in Tripura; if so, what are the constraints in clearing the project?

THE MINISTER Op STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) to (c) KRIBHCO had submitted a proposal for setting up a gas-based 900 TPD ammonia and 1550 TPD urea plant at Ramchandranagar near Agartala in Tripura in June, 1992. The Department of Fertilizers had recommended this proposal to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for allocation of 1.3 MMSCMD of gas on 31-8-1992. No tangible progress in the implementation of the project could be made due to the following reasons:—

(i) Non-availability of ground water at the project site offered by the State Government.

(ii) Unsuitable|difficult terrain at the proposed site.

(iii) Need to make investment for strengthening of the road network necessary for transportation of equipments for settingup the plant.

(iv) Non-allocation of gas.

(d) M|s. Oswal Engineering and Projects owned by M|S. Oswal Agro Mills Ltd. had informed the Department in February 1993 that they intended to set lip gas-based 2x600 tpd ammonia and 2 x 1043 tpd trea plants alongwith a 300tpd methanol plant in Tripura by importing a second hand plant lying idle in a foreign country. The company did not pursue the matter further.

Infrastructure industry status to housing

*179. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a final decision to accord infrastructure industry status to Housing and Housing finance; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SMT. SHEILA KAUL): (a) and (b) No such decision has been taken or is contemplated.

Prices of basic and life saving drugs

*180. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the prices of basic and life saving drugs would shoot up by as much as about 400 to 1,000 per cent in the country due to the stipulations of the GATT Agreement Which has come into force since January this year as reportedly pointed out by the newly appointed President of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) at this first Press Conference on 17th February, 1995 in New Delhi;

(b) whether it is a fact that the opportunities created for future research and development too would be "nullified' as it would not be possible to develop "a! new, innovative and economical process due to product patenting which would become compulsory if the Dunkel proposals are accepted" as per new-item published in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 18th February, 1995; and

(c) if so in what manner Government propose to fill up this existing health vaccum in the country on account of price hike of drugs and other factors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) to (c) There will be no impact of the TRIPS Agreement on. the prices of the existing drugs in the market whether patented or non-patented. The impact of the TRIPs Agreement on the drugs patented after 1-1-1995 will depend on a number of factors including the nature of the availability of the therapeutic equivalent substitute non-patented drugs in the market, licensing and marketing strategies adopted by the patent holders, including the option of local manufacturing and the general scenario that might be prevailing in the international market.

The Agreement does not, in any way, restrict the opportunities for research and development by the Indian manufacturers to develop new, innovative and economical process for drugs for which patent applications had been field before 1-1-1995. The WTO Agreement further provides a transition period of 10 years to countries like India to delay the application of the provisions on product patent protection to areas of technology not so protectable in their territories on 1-1-1995.

Wasteland development programme

1663. SHRI NYODEK YONGGAM: Will the Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of districts in the country including Arunachal Pradesh which have been brought under Wasteland Development Programme; and

(b) what are the salient features of these schemes with Central assistance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) Department of Wasteland Development is implementing a project entitled 'Integrated Wasteland Development' in 99 districts of the country. A scheme for 'Grant-in-aid' which envisages 100 per cent, grant to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) Cooperatives, trusts, schools, colleges etc. for sustainable development of non-forest Wastelands including private wastelands, is also being implemented in 88 districts by the Deptt, of Wasteland Development. Another Grant-in-aid scheme, taken up by Ministry of Environment & Forests, is applicable to all the districts in the country.

Financial assistance for Grant-in-Aid schemes is provided for raising of seed lings, planting, training, and extension, soil & moisture conservation, grass and fodder development.

(b) The Department of Wasteland has taken up a number of schemes which are briefly described below:—

INTEGRATED WASTELANDS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT SCHEME

This scheme envisages an integrated approach to wastelands development and preparation of management plans based upon microplanning in consultation with the local people on a watershed basis. The components of the scheme include in-situ soil & moisture conservation, plantation, agro-forestry, fodder develpment etc.

TECHNOLOGY EXTENSION

The objectives of this scheme include identification if cost effective models suitable to various regions/agro-climatic zones for sustainable development of wastelands., propagation of genetically improved species of trees/ plantations relating to fuel and fodder biomass productions, Silvi-Horti plantations etc.

INVESTMENT PROMOTIONAL SCHEME

The Investment Promotional Scheme, which was approved in February, 1994 would cover afforestation, farm forestry and other land based activities. The principle objective of this scheme is towards promoting/ facilitating|attracting| channelising]mobilising resources from the financial institutions, corporate bodies including user industries and other enterpreneurs for the development of wastelands belonging to individual farmers,